



~~SECRET~~

File
AD/NE

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

12 July 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: The Dominican Situation

1. The heirs of Trujillo are seeking to regain international acceptance by relaxing somewhat the late dictator's stringent political controls and permitting an appearance of democratic political activity. However, the violence incited by pro-Castro elements on 7 July demonstrates that any relaxation involves some risk for the security of the regime.

2. The real power in the Dominican Republic is held by Ramfis Trujillo through his control of the armed forces and the police. He is apparently resolved to preserve and protect his family's political and economic interests. However, he has permitted the titular president, Balaguer, to encourage the open development of political opposition groups. Both men probably estimate that the well-established machinery of the

25X1

~~SECRET~~

DOCUMENT NO. 2
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☒ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE:
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 8/24/00

SECRET

government-controlled Partido Dominicana will suffice to sweep the national election to be held in May 1962.

3. The upper and middle class elements long opposed to the Trujillo regime are still terrorized by the brutalities which they suffered at the hands of the dictator, and by the presence and power of Ramfis. They have been unwilling to organize a public political opposition without convincing US or OAS guarantees of their personal safety, and moreover remain divided as to personal loyalties and political aims. The only publicly organized opposition to appear so far consists of two small groups, the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) and the Dominican Popular Movement (MPD).

4. The PRD is a long-established organization of Dominican exiles, with branches in New York, Havana, San Juan, and Caracas. Its leaders have associations with ex-President Figueres, of Costa Rica, and President Betancourt of Venezuela. Because it is a party of exiles, it has very little strength or influence within the Dominican Republic.

- 2 -

SECRET

SECRET

5. The MPD was organized last summer when Trujillo, in order to demonstrate the existence of a Castroist threat in the Dominican Republic, allowed Maximo Lopez Molina, a pro-Communist exile, to return from Cuba and form an opposition group. The party was subsequently suppressed, but has been reactivated. In contrast to the PRD, it can claim that its members have endured the Trujillo tyranny. It is active and aggressive and Castro/Communist in character. It began the 7 July disturbance by seizing control of a PRD meeting.

*though probably
still small
in size.*

6. Although the surfacing of violent opposition is a serious setback to the Trujillo dynasty, the regime's position probably has not yet been jeopardized. Such opposition as has appeared is still rudimentary, despite its dramatic success in demolishing the official Radio Caribe. Those in the military most clearly identified with the Trujillos as well as those at lower levels who fear the situation which might follow their departure appear to stand behind the regime. The police state mechanism -- though less obtrusive and more respectful of human life, remains intact.

- 3 -

SECRET

SECRET

7. Nevertheless, the regime can suppress the opposition only at the risk of tearing down the impression it has gone to some length to foster: that democracy is at hand in the Dominican Republic. New differences on this account probably are developing between Trujillo and the President. The moderate opposition is showing impatience to assume leadership in the political arena.

8. However, the MPD has by its recent actions demonstrated its potential for stirring up mob action and therefore its right to expect some representation in almost any anti-Trujillo opposition. It is already seeking to affiliate with the 14th of June Movement,* a small clandestine opposition group with at least some middle class membership.

9. There is a good chance that elements in the military may choose to remove the Trujillos and perhaps act on Balaguer's behalf in hopes of preventing a swing toward the extreme left

*The movement draws its name from the date in 1959 on which a Castro-supported invasion group made its abortive attempt to initiate revolution against Generalissimo Trujillo. However, a member of the movement has said that its name is intended to exploit the event, not to emulate Castro.

SECRET

in their country. This would be most likely if the Trujillos, confronted with prolonged demonstrations of popular resentment, attempted to reinstitute the harsh repressive tactics associated with the dead dictator.

10. The danger is that if the military or other moderate elements do not act in time, the energy displayed by the MPD or others sympathetic with or willing to accept support from Castro may make them the most attractive focal point for the now passive majority element among the politically conscious which favors change.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

SHERMAN KENT
Chairman

- 5 -

SECRET

207 14 11 12 64 21